Translations in Verse

Helena C. Frank

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BY

HELENA C. FRANK

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TRANSLATIONS FROM THE RUSSIAN

DEMONS

(*Pushkin*)

CLOUDS are shifting, clouds are flying,
  Scarce the hidden moon's pale light
On the drifting snow is lying—
  Wild the heavens, wild the night.
Swiftly o'er the stormswept lowland—
  Jingle, jingle bells amain!
Swiftly still, though heavy hearted,
  Drive I o'er the unknown plain.

"Ho there, driver, onward!"—Faster,
  Good my lord, we may not go:
For the stormwind blinds me, master,
  And the roads are choked with snow.
Useless all!—the track is hidden:
  We are lost to help and home:
From afar the demon 's spied us!
  Closer circling see him come!

Ha! beside us he's careering,
  Hissing, spitting,—now, I ween,
Round yon steed, so madly veering
  On the brink of the ravine.
There—if near or far I know not,
  He was whirling in my sight.
There again he pined and dwindled,
  Vanished into empty night!

Clouds are shifting, clouds are flying,
  Scarce the hidden moon's pale light
On the drifting snow is lying—
  Wild the heavens, wild the night.
Courage fails to struggle longer—
  Suddenly the sleigh bells cease—
Pause the team—"Declare, thou yonder,
  Wolf or tree stem—it is peace?"

Hark! the wind is wailing sadly—
  Loudly snort the startled team.
There! see, there he gambols madly,
  Through the mirk his eyeballs gleam.
Once again the team has started:
  Jingle, jingle bells amain!
Lo, the spirit hosts assemble
  O'er the faintly gleaming plain!

Form they have not, have no number,
  Lightly whirling round they seem
Like the dead leaves of November
  In the moon's uncertain beam.
Are they endless? Whither fly they?
  Sing they why so sadly, say!
Mourn they for their dead? in marriage
  Give some cursèd witch away?

Clouds are shifting, clouds are flying,
  Scarce the hidden moon's pale light
On the drifting snow is lying—
  Wild the heavens, wild the night.
Still they come and still they vanish
  In the darkness o'er the plain,
Still their moaning and imploring
  Rends my very heart in twain!

THE OAKLEAF AND THE SYCAMORE

(*Lermontoff*)

A LEAFLET there fell from an oaktree, and straightway was carried
Afar o'er the steppe by the stormwind, that stayed not nor tarried,
Till, withered and shrivelled the leaflet, and fainting with anguish,
It flung him away on the shore of the Black Sea to languish.

On the shore of the Black Sea a sycamore stood in her splendour,
The light-fingered breeze with her toying full sprightly and tender,
Birds of Paradise sate on the boughs that swayed down to the waters,
And sweetly still sang they in praise of the Sea-king's fair daughters.

The feet of the sycamore humbly approaches the stranger,
And pleads in his mis'ry for shelter from suffering and danger.
Thus spake he: "An oakleaf unfortunate here you behold me!
Afar in the North did the shade of my parent enfold me.
Alone and at hazard I've wandered now days without number,
I die of the noons without shade, of the nights without slumber.
To grant me a shelter this day, oh, let pity compel you!
Of wonder and beauty full many a tale I can tell you."

"What want I with thee? thou, O stranger, art faded and pining!
I am young, I am fair, and my leaves in their beauty are shining.
And how should I care for the marvellous tales thou art bringing,
So weary am I of the Paradise Birds and their singing.

"Depart then, O stranger! the Sun-god himself is my lover:
For him with new verdure my boughs and my branches I cover,
And skyward and seaward I spread them with garlands enlacing,
While lowly and tranquil the waters my feet are embracing."

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE ITALIAN

ALONE

(*Ada Negri*)

All silently descends the autumn ev'ning,
  The chill, white mists o'er lowland meadows crawl,
And from the leaden sky on dark'ning copses
  Mysterious shadows fall.

The leaves are falling too, and lightly flutter
  In passing gusts of wind, to sink again
Like faded dreams. What echo sighs around us
  Of kisses past and vain?

Where sunlight glints upon her silken tresses,
  Fades the last rose of summer, overblown;
She gazes upward to the leafless planetrees,
  Pale, statuesque, alone.

Vale-ward she looks and thinks of low, white cradles
  Where, curly head on downy pillow prest,
While the dream-fairies circle lightly round them,
  The little children rest.

Their mothers watch, and through the deep'ning twilight
  Steals, as it were from out the ev'ning sky,
Steals, as it were the slumber-song of angels,
  An ancient lullaby.

Where woods are deep and nests yet unforsaken,
  Toward his mate the bird doth softly creep
And stirs no more. The wind, with gentle breathing
  Hath laid itself to sleep.

On some deserted field the mist now gathers
  Around a little shiv'ring flower-bell;
It droops its calix as a kiss 'twere meeting—
  And this is love as well.

O Paradise—she dreams! Beside a cradle,
Within a lowly, lamp-lit dwelling-place,
Lost in sweet thoughts, above the flying needle
She leans her lovely face.

And as he fain around the slender figure
His sturdy arms would fling with yearning wild,
Half fond, half shy, she turns to him and whispers,
"Hush, hush! Thou'lt wake the child."

Oh, unheard cry of anguish, useless longing,
Visions of joy and love, ye phantoms, fly!
Waft upwards still beyond the naked planetrees,
Melt in the dreary sky.

Like withered leaf in palest ev'ning sunlight
Her heart's last hope for evermore has flown.
O nests, O flowers, kisses, snow-white cradles,
Vanish! She is alone.

In stillness sad descends the autumn ev'ning,
Resounds from far the raven's joyless call,
And on her soul as on the dark'ning copses
The dismal shadows fall.

They fall. Still, fair as ever Grecian marble,
Against the gloomy heavens standeth she,
The while a shudder through the chill air thrilling
Whispers: it may not be.

THE OLD CHURCH

(*Ada Negri*)

Thou temple old, where I, a pensive maiden,
'Neath the majestic arches prayed—of thee,
With mystery and age and shadow laden
The memory shall still unchanging be.

There, thirteenth century Madonnas holy
  Upon the mildewed walls were smiling pure,
And oftentimes a long-robed priest came slowly,
  Like some pale wraith, from out an aisle obscure.

There, was an odour as of withered roses,
  A perfume as of faded violet,
There, was the silence deep wherein reposes
  The soul of ages past, whose sun has set.

There, was a lamp before an altar gleaming,
  Like a desire ungranted, day and night,
And sweet it seemed to me to kneel half dreaming
  And half in prayer, upon the marbles white.

Oh, hours inspired, the while a sacred story
  The organ told in solemn accents deep,
And, softly lulled by dreams of future glory,
  My soul as in a cradle sank to sleep.

Oh, hours inspired, when first in me upsprang,
  When first rushed forth the bursting tide of rhyme,
And loudly in my startled hearing rang
  The azure trumpet note of realms sublime.

Oh, hours that slid into the golden distance
  Of yonder long departed, radiant May,
Like swallows, cleaving swift the air's resistance,
  That dart across the sky 'twixt ray and ray.

Oh, hours of rev'rie and enchantment vanished,
  Ye I remember, I remember yet,
As one a love from out the heart depths banished
  Recalling with the tears of vain regret!

Forward, still forward! cry the voices round me;
  They urge me on along the stony ways;
In harshest net of subtle cords they've bound me—
  But on the azure still is fixed my gaze.

And aye toward the Past serene and stilly
  A fond desire bids the sad soul repair,
Oh, atmosphere of incense old and lilies,
  In the grave temple where I knelt in prayer!

Oh, aisles, oh peace conventual and tender,
  Oh ghosts that wandered down the aisles obscure,
Oh thirteenth-century Madonnas slender,
  Betwixt the yellowing arches smiling pure!

Oh, to forget with you could I endeavour
  The wrong that I have suffered, done and seen,
And on your marbles blessèd sing for ever
  The praise of the departed years serene!

UNEMPLOYED

(*Ada Negri*)

SUNBURNT and tall, his clothing half-destroyed,
A blacksmith's sinewy frame,
Or soldier's, in its vigour unalloyed,
He stood outside the door, unnerved and pale;
One of the unemployed.

And first he said: "Free from disease and pain,
I only ask for work.
My arm is iron. Through the sun and rain
For two long months I've sought. At every door
I knock—and still in vain."

Who answered, I forget, but 'twas a "no"
Spoke with unfeeling tone.
His face contracted with a speechless woe,
And hoarsely came his voice, as it had been
A sob of anguish slow.

And : "For the sake of your belovèd dead,"
(He prayed) "refuse me not !
It is an awful thing to hear 'No' said,
When one is starving ! For the sake alone
Of your belovèd dead !"

He said beside : "If you believe in God,
Refuse me not ! a right
To toil was mine since first the earth I trod.
It is a brutal thing to pass the fallen by,
If one believe in God !"

Who answered then, I cannot now recall,
But 'twas a "no," timid and faint in tone.
I saw him stagger as about to fall,
And then without a word he turned away,
Bowing his shoulders tall.

I followed him with fascinated gaze,
I watched him slow depart,
With weary feet along the stony ways,
While on his head the mid-day sun of June
Poured down its fiery rays.

He vanished ; but in fancy, I at will
Followed that hopeless course—
The useless strength, scorned and despisèd still,
And on, and on, squalid, unwashed and torn,
Fevered, at last, and ill.

By town, and cot, and farm on lonely heath,
Proud mendicant, his woe
Displayed in vain—and then, with failing breath
One day, dead beat this time and broken down,
To fall, imploring death !

Then I, with anguish pale, and low bowed head,
And murmuring : "Forgive !"
Felt of the centuries the error dread—
All the remorse and shame of all the world—
Weigh on my heart like lead.

THE LULLABY

(*Ada Negri*)

My mother dear, when soft my childish head
  Had sunk to rest upon the pillows white,
Would take her work and watch beside my bed
  Till far into the night.

And she was wont a little song to sing,
  An elfin lay, as hour by hour went by,
Around me still, at times, the echoes ring
  Of that sweet lullaby.

The notes steal softly through the quiet room,
  They tremble with unuttered tenderness,
And fade away at last amid the gloom,
  As light as a caress.

And I—I dream. With gently fanning wings
  There hovers round a band of angels fair
That whisper low of sweet and holy things—
  With halos round their hair.

Alas, my mother! hushed thy singing now,
  Chill mis'ry, creeping closer day by day,
Untimely blanched the locks above thy brow
  And stole my youth away.

Hushed is thy singing now. But how resigned
  Thou bad'st adieu unto our ev'ry joy,
And sawest Fate, the merciless and blind,
  Our happiness destroy!

In me the while rebellious longings rose—
  The scornful world, so full on ev'ry side
Of shame, injustice and unheeded woes,
  Undaunted I defied.

Still, if upon my careworn face there rest
  A stolen glance from thy belovèd eye,
And, laden with past suff'rings, from thy breast
  There steal a wistful sigh—

Dimly the angels once more round us move,
  A distant echo sweet my spirit charms,
And pious then and passionate the love
  That draws me to thy arms.

Oh, when thou look'st upon me, and the day
  Wanes, and the shadows steal across the plain,
To fling my poet-crown of thorns away,
  And be a child again!

In memory of happier times long fled,
  I fain would hear again that ancient rhyme
Thou sang'st of old beside my little bed
  At quiet ev'ning time.

Or if I might but kiss away the grief
  That shadows o'er thy forehead pale and mild,
And in thine arms again find sweet relief
  As when I was a child!

SMILES

(*Ada Negri*)

It was the time he saw thee first of all:
White as a lily, golden-haired and tall,
        With form divine;
The ribbon at thy waist a field-flow'r bore,
And round thee April suns for evermore
        Seemed still to shine.

And straight the dreamer's inmost soul caught fire—
With cords of jealous love and strong desire
        He bound thee fast.
And thou, a bride, didst follow him as gay
As roseate cloudlet, swiftly borne away
        Upon the blast.

And then a child was given thee—oh, joy,
To smooth the blonde head of thy baby-boy,
Oh, heart-depths stirred!
Sole happiness that never turns and stings:
To live upon his kiss, his murmurings,
His first, sweet word!

Through verdure smiles thy young house o'er the way:
Invading hosts of toys and pictures gay
The floors have strown,
Through windows to the sun wide-open set
The noonday dreams of hidden violet
And rose are blown.

While through light rooms the baby runs at will,
Of airy hopes thou weavest round him still
The azure threads;
Thy soul exults, and lifts herself and sings,
As in the April skies bright, wingèd things
Above our heads.

Thou smil'st—so simple and secure thou art!
One blow, one disenchantment, and thy heart
Would break. Oh, smile!
The fortunate in this world are so few.
I watch thee, and of lark-wings scatt'ring dew
I think the while:

And stir of nests with moss and love soft lined,
Where thick the blossoms toss in April's wind,
Of nests unseen,
Brimful of infant innocence: the flow
Of river-waters: dawn's clear jasper-glow,
And noons serene;

Wide cornfields sacred with a thousand hopes,
And pastures, that on distant mountain slopes
A greenness show,
Where draughts of thymy air the soul breathes in,
And soon a sweet forgetfulness doth win
Of all below.

THE DEAD CHILD

(*Annie Vivanti*)

Her wings were folded, and we had forgotten,
She might be flying.
Oh, laughing eyes!
Who would have thought that, homesick, she was sighing
For Paradise!

She seemed an angel, and we had forgotten
That she was mortal.
Scarce lily-tall,
How should she venture under Death's dark portal
Without us all?

We loved her so! but when she heard them call her,
The child meek-hearted,
From yonder shore,
She spread her wings, obedient, and departed,
To come no more.

EVENING

(*A. Fogazzaro*)

The Bells of Oria

In western skies the sunset-tints are fading,
The night approaches.
From evil spirits hovering near us
Keep us mortals—Jesu, hear us!
Let us pray.

THE BELLS OF 'OSTENO

And we, beside the lake,
With solemn voices at the close of day
The echoes wake.
From evil spirits hovering near us,
Keep us mortals—Jesu, hear us!
Let us pray.

THE BELLS OF FURIA

And we, high perching
On the gloomy mountains,
We also say:
From evil spirits hovering near us,
Keep us mortals—Jesu, hear us!
Let us pray.

ECHOES FROM THE VALLEYS

Let us pray.

ALL THE BELLS

The light is born and dies.
Of sunsets and of dawns what gain at last?
All flies so fast.
Save thee, O Lord, all flies,
And, saving the Eternal, all is vain.

ECHOES FROM THE VALLEYS

Is vain!

ALL THE BELLS

Let us pray, let us pray again:
From the hill and the valley deep,
For the living and those that sleep,
For so much hidden sin and so much pain.
Have mercy, Lord!

All the suffering
That decries thee,
All the error
That denies thee,
All the love
That defies thee,
Forgive, Thou Holy!

ECHOES FROM THE VALLEYS

Thou Holy!

ALL THE BELLS

Let us pray—for the sisters and brothers
Who lie below.
We call some sinning, and guiltless others,
And thou, O Mystery,
Alone dost know!

ECHOES FROM THE VALLEYS

Alone dost know!

ALL THE BELLS

Let us pray as before
For the deep distress
Of the world that shall live, and love, and sorrow,
As to-day, to-morrow,
To an end which the angels may not guess.
Peace to the hill and the shore!
To the bell once more:
Peace!

ECHOES FROM THE VALLEYS

Peace!

NEW SPRING

(*Vittoria Anganoor*)

ATHWART the great blue sky are passing slow,
Are sailing silently the great, light clouds,
And lost in thought they seem,
Remembering the springs of long ago.
The rosebuds here are opening in crowds,
But languidly; the flowers also dream
Of seasons past that shall not be again.

These caught the blood of young Adonis slain,
And these the Grecian maids of those far years
Have sought for deepening their leafy crowns,
With laughter, o'er Ciprigna's sunny plain.
On seeing them so fair, their horrid shears
The wrinkled blear-eyed Fates once more laid down,
Nor cut awhile the life-thread twirling fast.

And o'er the realm of Aphrodite vast
A clamour faint, ineffable, did run
Of sudden cries, of piping and of songs,
And on that heaving sea of love was cast,
As if to bless, the glory of the sun.
And boys together walked in happy throngs,
And glanced toward the virgins stolen-wise.

Smoked Citherea's altars to the skies,
And on the stream of girls and roses gazed
The great, white goddess from her marble stand,
Engarlanded, with tranquil, pagan eyes.
And now the altars to the ground are razed,
And dust long since is every slim, white hand,
That kept the torch of life and love aglow.

And April comes once more—the roses blow.
All through the long, warm evenings, in their crowds,
And men have once again begun to dream.
But o'er the great, blue sky are passing slow,
Are sailing silently, the great, white clouds,
And lost in thought they seem—
Remembering the springs of long ago.

FIDES

(*G. Pascoli*)

WHEN sunset skies were splendid to behold,
And shone the cypress like to purest gold,
The mother to her drowsy infant said:
"Whole gardens just as bright are overhead."
The child is fast asleep, and through his dream
The boughs, the trees, the forests, golden gleam;
While out of doors, 'neath starless skies and blind,
The wailing cypress shudders in the wind.

THE GRANDMOTHER'S SONG

(*Costantino Nigra*)

I KNOW of an island afar in the waters
Where rules the most fair of a king's seven daughters.

The grand dame, spinning,
Sings in the kitchen; to her voice that quakes
The children, clustered, listen;
One, in the cradle neither sleeps nor wakes.

Each gallant who comes to that island of bliss,
Must pay her a toll-due: she levies a kiss.

Outside, in drifts,
The snow athwart the gloomy night is falling,
While, at the rotten door and broken panes,
The wintry wind is whistling, rattling, calling.

A gentle youth to the island went—
To kiss the maiden would not consent.

And still the song goes on,
While evening into night is passing slow.
The children's eyelids close.
The flame within the lantern flickers low.

The youth has been cast into prison and chains,
Till he kiss the damsel, he there remains.

Upon the straw
They lay their heads and close together creep,
And still, low, low,
They hear the grand dame singing through their sleep:

He is screened from the sun and the wind and the showers,
His bed is of samite, his fetters of flowers.

And they dream of the island,
The far, green island where the boy is holden,
And the pale maiden,
Who combs for all to see her tresses golden.

I know of an island afar in the waters.
Where sighs the most fair of a king's seven daughters!

And, last of all,
The crone sleeps, where she span, with nodding head,
And dreams that in the chest
There's still some flour—and half a loaf of bread.

NEW YEAR'S MORNING

(*P. Mastri*)

O YEAR, what dost thou bring?
—Shadow and light and love, and after: sorrow—
The eternal things. A few brief smiles, and sorrow.
And some new hope, maybe, and after, sorrow.
For every gain to-day, a loss to-morrow.
Snow in the winter, and the rose in spring.

And how dost counsel me?
The shades depart—
'Tis day! thy sins and falsehoods from thee throw,
And never in another's grief be set
Thy joy, but thine own pain therein forget.
Haste from thy garden walks to clear the snow,
Then take, in spring, the roses to thy heart!

PASTEL

(*A. Avancini*)

WHO climbs the old cathedral stairs, discovers,
Beyond the city walls of ancient days
A distant plain—in tremulous opal haze.

And there, where far the shining streams of silver
Flow interlacing, is a forest seen,
Unfolding wide—a mantle of velvet green.

Within the forest, where the ilex thickens,
And where the sunlight falls subdued and chid,
There lies and laughs—a marvellous orchard hid.

And where the orchard's sweet, enchanted blossoms
A thousand perfumes to the breezes fling,
With mossy edge—there bubbles a crystal spring.

And close beside the fountain, in the nooning
There sits a little maid with tress of gold,
And naked feet—that play in the waters cold.

And down the water still her thoughts go floating,
Like broken lights, along the rippling stream ;
They rock and toss—the trees of the forest dream.

A HOPE

(*Marianna Giarre, Billi*)

O MARY, Mother mine, I tell you all
My inmost thoughts and wishes, great or small.
With open heart, no single thing concealing,
My sorrows and my joys I bring to you.
To-day across my life a hope is stealing—
O blessed Virgin, make that hope come true !

And if it might—then, when at eventide
The rosary beads between my fingers glide,
And when I stand here, as I stand this morning,
With dewy buds your altar stone adorning,
No more alone, O Virgin, I shall be—
Because my husband will be here with me ! . . .

CONSOLATION

(*Gabriele d'Annunzio*)

I HEAR a distant peal—oh, say, around
What lonely sorrow breaks the flood of sound ?
Athwart a house the shadow slowly creeps—
The house wherein my mother waits and weeps.

Cease now to weep ! the sun of thy delight
Hath sought thine arms anew, for he is fain
To cease from lying. Let us flower again
Among the flowers—thy face is, ah ! too white.

Come out of doors! between the garden-beds
A weed-grown path still winds for thee and me.
I'll tell thee there how gently Mystery
O'er bygone things her silvery curtain spreads.

A few pale roses hang yet on the trees,
Some lowly herb a fragrance sheds the while,
The dear, deserted place once more shall smile—
With thee to-day shall smile—so thou but please!

And I will also tell thee there, how sweet
The smile of certain things long laid away
On Memory's darkest shelf—what wouldst thou say,
Should flowers spring from underneath thy feet?

And thus, though April's over, shall it be.
Come—with uncovered head! it is a slow
September sun; thy locks no silver show,
And subtle is their parting still to see.

Why thus with weary look deny me, say?
The mother tries to please the obedient son.
Adown those cheeks too many tears have run—
Come, let awhile the sunbeams o'er them play!

For see, thou must be strong—thou must not think
Of evil things—oh, come, and whilst we walk
Toward the roses, softly I will talk,
And into happy dreams thy soul shall sink. . . .

Dream, dream, beloved one! at thy desire
Shall all things be to thee as once before.
My heart I place in thy pure hand once more,
In spite of what has passed, unspoiled, entire.

Dream, dream! beside thee henceforth shall I stand
And in thy life as simple as complete
Will live again: the light and winnowed wheat,
I will receive it henceforth at thy hand.

Dream that the dreaming-time returns at last!
I to thy soul am speaking—dost thou hear?
Lo, quivering in the golden atmosphere,
A phantom April from the buried past!

September—dost thou hear?—in its perfume—
I know not how—and in its pallor too,
Has still the perfume and the pallor too
Of some dead April risen from the tomb.

Oh, let us dream, then, ere the time be gone,
And let us smile, since this, our spring, is here!
Within the house, when eventime is near,
The spinet I will open—later on.

For years now has it slept!—full many a chord
Imperfect even then . . . the ivories all
The mem'ry of my ancestress recall,
Whose waxen fingers glided o'er the board.

And while I play, shall float about the keys—
Still art thou listening? with the music blent,
An odour delicate, like noonday scent
Of fading violets upon the breeze.

And I will play, amid the twilight gloom,
An old gavotte, a little sad and slow,
But very courtly—thou wilt hear it low,
As I were playing in some distant room.

And I will make a song for thee alone,
That, cradle-like, thy soul to rest shall lull,
Upon an ancient rhythm, but fanciful,
And somewhat idly graceful in its tone.

And thus old days shall be restored, and calm
And simple once again the soul shall be,
And lightly, at thy wish, shall come to thee,
As water fills the hollow of the palm.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GERMAN

THE LOST COMPANION

(*Mayer*)

SHE and the garden were the dearest friends!
  Soft, in the autumn, faded both away.
They fell asleep what time the sunshine ends,
  Beneath one snowy covering deep they lay.

But lo! the garden has awoke from sleep:
  "Where are you"—and "where *are* you?" but no stir
Can reach the little one, she lies so deep—
  And still the garden calls for her, for her.

Climbs the house wall the blue Convolvulus,
  "You're hid behind the wardrobe, now confess!
Why will you not come out to play with us?
  And oh! what colour 's your new summer dress?"

PATIENCE

(*Heyse*)

PATIENCE—be patient and still
Over the window sill
The sunbeams will soon appear.
High o'er the tower where the bells are sleeping,
An hour ago the light was creeping—
The bellman's chamber already is bright.
The ringer lives nearest the clang of the bells,
Most fiercely around him the tempest swells;
But to him comes earliest the dawn's sweet light.

Down, down, in the street
Where the low roofs almost meet—
There it is quiet and safe and warm,
Storm and lightning can never harm—
But the dawning comes so late!
To every place its special grace,
A hope lies hid in every fear.
  Patience—be patient and still!
  Over thy window sill
  The sunbeams will soon appear.

OFF THE HIGHWAY

(*Th. Storm*)

How still it is! the moor lies sleeping
  All silent in the warm noon-day,
The while a rosy light is creeping
  Across the milestone old and grey.
The perfume of the herbs is blent
In soft blue air with heather scent.

Behold where sheenèd beetles muster,
  Their corselets gleam in ferny dells,
And where the hive-bees ever cluster
  Around the honeyed heather bells.
From bush to bush the winchats fly;
The larks are singing in the sky.

By yon old hut in lonely hollow,
  Where sunshine on the low thatch plays,
An old man leans, who seems to follow
  The bees with blissful, dreamy gaze.
His boy beside the threshold sits,
And reeds for rustic piping slits.

Scarce, spite the stillness all-enfolding
  You hear the distant church-clock chime;
The gaffer nods, in dreams beholding
  The well-stored hives of autumn-time.
No echo of the world's mad race
Disturbs the quiet of the place.

THE TOWN BESIDE THE SEA

(*Th. Storm*)

THE sea is grey, the shore is grey,
  And lonely lies the town;
The sea-mist never rolls away;
The sea-waves only, night and day
  Are heard around the town.

No rustling forest stands a-nigh;
  You hear no spring birds call;
On autumn nights the harsh, wild, cry
Of wild swans only, flying by;
  The grass waves rank and tall.

My feet are set in far-off ways,
  My heart still clings to thee!
The memory sweet of boyhood's days
For ever round thee smiling plays,
  O grey town by the sea!

THE PRESENCE OF THE BELOVED

(*Goëthe*)

I THINK on thee when ripples clear are glancing
  In sunny beams;
I think on thee when moonrays weird are dancing
  On mountain streams.

I see thee, when there mounts on distant highway
The dust-cloud light,
And when the traveller quakes on slippery byway
At dead of night.

And thee I hear, when by the sullen seething
Of waves I rove;
I listen oft when noontide hush is breathing
In stilly grove.

I am beside thee, though in exile pining—
To me art near.
Now sinks the sun; the stars will soon be shining—
Oh, wert thou here!

THE VALE OF THE ESPINGO

(*Paul Heyse*)

Up the torrent-bed to the hills they went.
Folk of the Moors, valiant their show.
On war with the Franks were they all intent.
In companies up by the streams they went,
Blue streams from Pyrenean snow.

Their mantles wave in the dark ravine:
Shrilly the wind wails down the cleft.
Their lances are pointed, their eyes are keen.
No trace of the lurking Basques was seen,—
But their arrows come whizzing right and left.

And upwards the livelong day they wend—
Mournful ascent, hastily made.
The pine-wood seems as it never would end,
The mule-train has no more strength to spend,
The war-horse flags like a broken jade.

The path descends. From the grim defile
  Suddenly leads down to the vale.
Below them shimmering pastures smile
At the foot of the gloomy mountain pile;
  On sunlit wings the falcons sail.

The evening how mild and the meadows how green!
  Blossoming limes wave in the air.
Narcissus and jessamine pale are seen
The trailing branches of rose between;
  The scent of the flowers is everywhere.

The Moorish hearts to their depths are stirred,
  Bygone days in a trance they see.
When they startled on Hauran the antelope-herd,
When their bride they caressed and sweet fairy-tales heard
  In the rose-hung gardens of Engadì.

And so they descend, and dissolved is each band,
  Wooing the shade, seeking the cool.
As in laurel-groves of their native land
There stealeth a breath from the salt sea strand,
  Doth freshness arise from the valley-pool.

Their cares and their counsels, oh, where are they?
  Lightly their swords to the ground they throw,
For they surely are exiled no more to-day!
And now 'mid the rose-blooms they joyous stray,
  And now they plunge in the lake below.

Oh, home again! now sigh for release
  Those who should watch the tents before.
The world around them breathes only peace,
Their fears and their cares for one hour may cease.
  Ah, they should have watched!—but they watch no more.

They watch no more. Forth steals from her lair
  Craft the insidious, child of the night.
Out from the woodland she creeps with care,
She is nearing the tents—oh beware, beware!
  The arrows come whizzing left and right.

Too late! their doom is upon them now,
  All are unarmed, and the roses red,
They scatter their leaves o'er each livid brow.
Oh, dream of delight, their undoing wast thou—
  For that vision of home was their life-blood shed.

PHARAOH

(*Strachwitz*)

WITH a troubled soul by the Red Sea swell,
With their brows in the dust lay Israël;
Before them a barrier of waters wide,
Behind them Pharaoh in wrath and pride.
"Jehovah! hast thou us forsaken?"

Then Moses, he struck the flood with his rod,
The waters rushed back at the word of God,
And His people trod the Red Sea sand
While the waters stood on either hand—
Not one was over-taken.

And Pharaoh came to the ocean sward
With curling lip and with naked sword,
His glittering chariots by thousands rolled,
And horse and rider shone all like gold.
"Now, Lord! bid Thy glory awaken!"

And down they swept—they might not see
The spectre Death ride merrily!
And while they were treading the narrow lane
With a roar the waters closed again
And Egypt's grave was the ocean.

Heavy the armour and steep the shore !
Nor horse nor rider were heard of more.
And Judah knelt and the Lord was near ;
And there lay the waters, calm and clear,
With scarcely a ripple in motion.

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES

(*Gerok*)

THE sycamore's broad leafage
Droops fainting o'er the Nile,
Lies dozing mid the sedges
The sluggish crocodile.
But in the length'ning shadows
By palm and flag-leaves cast,
The waters steal rejoicing,
The long day nearly past.
What glimmers twixt the palm trees
As veils were waving white ?
What rustles through the grasses
Like girlish footsteps light ?
The coolly flowing waters,
The evening breezes mild,
Tempt in the golden sunset
The Pharaoh's loveliest child.
Mark well the royal circlet
Above her temples glow !
A fan of rarest plumage
Wafts coolness o'er her brow,
The while a polished mirror,
Sweet oil in cruse of gold,
The screen of ostrich feathers,
Attendant maidens hold.

And now with looks of wonder
They pause upon their way,
Why gaze ye thus astonished ?
Why tarry, maidens, say !

Hark, where the sedge is closest,
From out the swaying reeds,
A murmuring most piteous
For help and comfort pleads.
So low among the rushes
What tender nestlings hide?
A fragile wicker basket
Rocks on the heaving tide!
Oh, bring it here, ye maidens,
And tell what in it lies,
"Alas, a Hebrew infant,"
The gentle Princess cries.
The foundling boy is beauteous,
Though scarcely three moons old,
Oh, ne'er did earthly sunlight
A fairer one behold.
The child-brow shines majestic,
Those full and glowing eyes
Hold girl-princess and maidens
Entranced in sweet surprise.

The Princess, soft caressing,
Has hushed the babe to rest
And, all unknowing, laid him
Upon his mother's breast.
The trembling Hebrew woman,
With stifled sobs of joy,
To Pharaoh's marble palace
Bears home, as nurse, her boy. . . .
Such, Father still unchanging,
The wonders Thou hast wrought,
The miracles of mercy,
Creating all of naught.
Thy grace, that saved the foundling
On lonely riverside,
Through sea and trackless desert
The chosen ones to guide— .
That called from out the sheepfolds
Old Jesse's youngest son

To Jacob's Throne in Salem,
Israel's anointed one—
In Bethehem's rude manger
The Heaven Child doth lay,
The Morning Star of nations,
The Herald of the day!

HEIMWEH

(*Gerok*)

Oh, take me home! I'm yearning for the homestead
And for my Father's breast,
I long to flee from out the world's rude brawling
Away and be at rest.
With hopes and wishes numberless I started—
I'm turning homewards still and humble-hearted.
No longer, O my Father, bid me roam,
But take me home!

Oh, take me home! I saw in dreams before me
A better fatherland,
Sweet welcomes waiting for me on the threshold—
An outcast here I stand.
The spring is past and homeward flies the swallow,
(Ah me, that I had wings wherewith to follow!)
O'er hill and dale and o'er the ocean foam.—
Oh, take me home!

Oh, take me home! When as a child they led me
To feast with strangers gay,
For one short hour only I made merry
And sang and laughed as they.
When still like stars my brother's eyes were shining,
My childish heart had turned from joy to pining.
Despite sweet apples, sweeter honey-comb,
I cried for home.

Oh, take me home! The small boat seeks the haven
When winds and waves are rough,
The stream the sea, the tired child its mother,
I too have done enough.
I've no more songs to sing in joy or sorrow,
My lyre's last cord will break before to-morrow.
No longer bid the footsore minstrel roam,
Oh, take me home!

THE MAIDEN SLEEPS

(*Gerok*)

THE maiden sleeps! Your darling lies in peace.
O mourners, let her rest.
That sweet, still face would have your wailing cease,
Since all is for the best.
She seems to say: "thrice blest behold me!
The everlasting arms enfold me."
The maiden sleeps.

The little maid! She played till she was tired,
She laughed herself to sleep!
The wooden doll which she so much admired,
Her Sunday finery cheap,
The story-book she most affected,
And all her treasures, lie neglected,
The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps! Her sky was always clear
And light her earthly lot,
A streamlet flowing ever gaily near
Some sunny garden-plot.
Or e'er the beams of morn forsook her,
Came Death in gentleness and took her.
The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps! She laid a willing head
Upon her Shepherd's arm.
Her spirit free alike from sin and dread,
Unwitting all of harm.

With peace within and love around her,
What softer deathbed could be found her?
The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps—Who knows what might have been?—
The world is false and cold!
But now to everlasting joy serene
She's gathered in the fold.
Though winter rage and thunder showers
Dash pitiless the summer flowers,
The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps! and now the last, long kiss
Upon the child-lips pale.
O God of mercies, help in hours like this,
When earthly comforts fail! . . .
Sing sweet and low, ye little lasses—
A last time down the lane she passes.
The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps! Clasp, Shepherd, to Thy breast
The Lamb now wholly Thine,
And on the little grave where she doth rest
Bid friendly starlets shine,
With wings perfumed from jessamine bowers
Soft breezes sing amid the flowers.
The maiden sleeps.

EPILOGUE TO SCHILLER'S "BELL"

(*Goethe*)

I

And so it came to pass! the peaceful chime
Thrilled a responsive land, and, fraught with hope,
Appeared a new-born joy: with festal song
We rose to greet the youthful sovereign pair.

Impetuous, to full-pitched feeling strung,
The lively crowd commingling forward pressed,
While, summoned to adorn the flowery stair,
The Arts conspired to make the scene more fair.

II

And now I hear a midnight tolling dread,
And dull and hollow swells the clang of dole.
It is not, cannot be for *him*, round whom
Each fond desire embracing clung? Could *he*,
Of life most worthy, fall the prey of death?
How is the world bewildered with such loss!
How are the hearts that loved him wounded deed!
Now weeps the world, can *we* do aught but weep?

III

For he was ours! what easy social grace
A kindly day would lend that lofty mien;
How, yielding to our own his temper grave,
He mingled gaily in alternate talk;
Then, swiftly changing, with a touch inspired,
Life's deepest import to our ken revealed,
And how in word and deed and high endeavour
He spent himself, that we have witnessed ever.

IV

For he was ours! oh, may that word of pride
Ring out above the loudest wail of grief!
With us he learnt, all tempest-tossed, to know
In sheltered port, life's calmer ebb and flow,
While mightily that realm his spirit trod
Where dwell immortal, beauty, goodness, truth—
And phantom-like behind him faded all
That which is low, and holdeth us in thrall.

V

And now the garden-turret he adorns
Whence astral voices he was wont to hear,
That reached the kindred, co-immortal soul
In tones at once mysterious and clear.
There (priceless gain to him and us) he wrought
Of day and night a wondrous interchange,
And met, to noblest effort bending still,
The dusk, the dark, that lames our weaker will.

VI

The rolling waves of History, swelling high,
Washed to his feet deeds worthy praise or blame,
The seething hosts of yonder tyrant kings
That spent their fury on our helpless earth.
The depths of terror and the heights sublime,
The ways of each discerning, he explored.
Now sank the moon, and to renewed delight
Arose the sun above the hill-top bright.

VII

And red and ever redder glowed his cheek,
Flushed with the youth which never fails nor flies,
Flushed with the valour, that or soon or late
Shall nobly overcome a dullard world.
Lit with yon faith that evermore aspires,
Now pressing boldly on, now nestling meek,
That goodness still may grow and work and bless,
Until there dawn the day of righteousness.

VIII

Yet held not he, so full of proven lore,
In low esteem our Stage, this structure light,
But pictured for us here how mighty Fate
Whirls the earth's axis round from day to night.

In rich creations deep and manifold
He taught us art and artist how to prize,
The flower of his striving gave, aflame
With his own life, this masque of life to frame.

IX

You knew him well, and how with giant paces
From purpose to accomplishment he sped,
Of men and minds in distant times and places
The scroll obscure with lightsome vision read.
How breathless in the clutch of pain he lay
With us around, and scarcely struggled free,
We all, for he was ours, beheld through tears
In the sad beauty of those by-gone years.

X

And when anew from off the loosened rack
Of anguish sore his look to ours he raised,
From out the weary, dragging consciousness
Of present time we carried him away,
With pleasing art and many a chosen wile
The newly-quickened spirit we refreshed,
Toward life's eventide, ere set of sun
A last, sweet smile with thankful hearts we won.

XI

Full early had he conn'd life's sterner page,
And pain and death familiar faces wore.
Now has he sunk, as he so oft revived,
And that which so long threatened—now appals.
Ah, but already his transfigured being
Hath seen itself transfigured here below,
And all we blamed, and all o'er which we sorrowed,
From death, from time, a nobler form hath borrowed.

XII

And spirits who with his were wont to strive,
And grudged the praise they could not but bestow,
They too have owned his power, and content
Within his magic circle captive stand.
He reached the highest, there united dwells
In fellowship with all we hold most dear.
Be honour his! and what life barely tendered
In fullest measure to the dead be rendered.

XIII

So he remains to us, who years ago,
Ten years already, vanished from our side.
By ways of blessing we have come to know
The world-wide thanks for world-wide teaching due:
For now o'er multitudes their flight have spread
His own peculiar treasures, while afar
Before us, comet-like, he flies and shines,
And endless light with his own light entwines.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FRENCH

(*F. Coppée*)

A LONG straight avenue—tall trees that rear
Their iron boughs toward the heavens drear,
Old, leafless elm-trees, meeting overhead.
Out there the sun is setting, large and red
He touches now the dim horizon's bound.
No bird—sometimes a distant crackling sound
In some low dell of the dumb forest—hark !
And far away, in moving outline dark
Against yon glowing disc of molten gold,
Bends laden o'er her stick a gammer old.

A salon Louis XVI, that opens straight
(Soft in the provinces the summer air)
Onto a garden of the self-same date,
Planned in correct French style and trimmed with care.
A branching elm, two swans in cool retreat.
A little girl plays on the harpsichord
Some minuet of Haydn quaint and sweet,
Striking full clearly on the old keyboard.
Grandpapa seated in his cane arm-chair,
In pigeon-wings, dreams of the long ago
When, hunter blythe, he woo'd the milkmaid fair,
And with his snuff-box beats the measure slow.

As Rousseau's tears, long since, were wont to flow
At these few words : the periwinkles blow !
So all the charm of recollection's sway
I feel. The weather, or the time of day,
A heart-beat, e'en a perfume breathed once more
Some vanished happiness will oft restore,
A fugitive delight, but oh how sweet !
And I am pleased, when, from a certain street
At five o' the evening, I may espy,
Beyond the roofs, a calm October sky.

(*F. Coppée*)

They said to her sometimes : " Dear, you must hold
The baby " (one's grown up at five years old !).
Nursing the child, she felt so proud and tall,
And took such care—he never had a fall.
Gravely, at " little mother " she would play.
Alas, the new-born angel flew away—
The coffin-length was measured by the cot.
And now a mourning dress the sister's got,
Says to herself, musing with troubled brow :
" 'Pears I don't care about my dolly now."

Oft in the evening, by the fitful blaze,
I dream of birds that die in woods, forlorn.
All through the long and dreary winter days,
The poor old nests, the empty nests and torn,
'Neath leaden skies rock in the wintry wind.
Oh how the birds must die in winter time !
And yet their fragile bones we'll never find
When seeking violets in the coming prime,
Nor when we tread the grasses by and by,
In April. Do they hide themselves to die ?

O languor sweet ! A joy is ev'ry scent.
Last night I peeled an orange—lo, a dream
Of stage-land with the warm perfume was blent.
A faggot burns—in wintry woods I seem,
Sounding a halt, to hear the hunter's horn.
Breathing the asphalt steam that, thick and dank
From out the cauldron heavily is borne,
I stand beside a tarred and sea-worn plank,
And watch a snow-white gull approach the quay
Amid the jewels of the purple sea.

IL PASSA

(*French Song*)

He passed—and well it may be, I should not
Have happened so to meet him in the way!
But close upon the high-road stands our cot,
And in my apron there were boughs of May.

He spoke—and I perchance was wrong to stand
And listen, and to show I understood—
But spring was beckoning across the land,
And April singing in the distant wood!

He loved me—certainly I should have been
Less prompt in giving, firmer to deny—
But when the heart is listening, I ween
It is the heart alone that makes reply!

He went away—and I am wrong to stand
And wait for his returning? ah, maybe!
But spring is beckoning across the land,
And if he come not—what is spring to me?

THE GREY SISTER

My father's house I quitted once for all,
My little sisters wept, my mother too.
Not with regret would I the past recall—
'Twere sin—and I so happy! thus to do.

Thou who did'st die for us, and to Thy fold
Did'st call me, Jesus, cast me not away!
For I, the consolation and the stay
Of other lives, have need to be consoled.

Strange to the world when out of it I went,
I hate it not—maybe
I should have known it, never to repent—
It was a dying man spake thus to me.

Whene'er its joys ephemeral and vain
Entice my heart, still sore from earthly loss,
My God, I clasp Thy cross—
My mother I shall never clasp again!

Ye memories of happy days gone by,
Why do ye seek me, why pursue me here!
With worldly pleasures what concern have I?
Their very name should strike my soul with fear.

The beggar on my head a blessing calls,
Sweet charities my every hour engage;
The care of orphans daily on me falls:
Thy handmaid, Lord, within these dreary walls,
Is childhood's mother, and the child of age.

And while my sisters to new scenes of glee
Perchance are bound,
Their fair, young heads with the same flowers crowned
That once were twined for me,
They bid me watch in prayer upon the ground.

Oh, images too faithful and too fair!
I seem in dreams the days that once have been,
My mother's tender kiss again I share,
And with my sisters seek the festive scene,
Like them, with rose-crowned hair.

Illusion of an instant, oh, how vain,
Whose very sweetness breaks its magic spell!
And hark! the plaintive tinkle of the bell—
The sick await me on their couch of pain.

There a poor girl once said to me: "I die,
And God is good, who ends my woes and fears,
For I was orphaned from my earliest years,
And never knew my family"; and I,
I have left mine—and mingling flowed our tears.

Yes, I have left it! snapt is every band,
And in my heart a noble pride finds room,
Whene'er the aged feebly press my hand
That guides them gently downward to the tomb.

Consoled in death by this weak voice of mine,
From mortal fears the sinner finds reprieve,
Nay—he it is who bids me ne'er to pine
For the vain world that I was first to leave.

And when in failing eyes a last bright ray
Of sacred hope and ardent faith I see,
"O Lord, receive his soul!" to God I pray,
And to the dying: "Brother, think on me!"

S'IL REVENAIT UN JOUR

(*M. Maeterlinck*)

"If he should come again,
What would you have me say?"
—"That he was waited for
Till Death came by this way."

"And if he questions still,
And still not knowing me?"
—"He suffers too, mayhap,
So speak him tenderly."

"What shall the answer be
If still for you he call?"
—"Give him my ring of gold
And answer not at all."

"And if he miss the sound
Of footsteps on the floor?"
—"Show him the quenchèd lamp,
And the open door."

"And if he ask, what wise
You sank at last to sleep?"
—"Then tell him that I smiled
So that he should not weep!"

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE SPANISH

RIMA LIII

(*Gustavo Becquer*)

Soon, as of old, the swallows will be clinging
In nesting-time round thy balcony,
And past thy lattice-window swiftly winging,
Once more shall call to thee ;

But those that paused one moment as they fleeted
To look on one so blest and one so fair,
That in their songs our names have oft repeated—
Will be no longer there !

Again the trailing woodbine shall endeavour
With clinging hold thy garden wall to scale :
Again at ev'ning time, more fair than ever,
Unfold her blossoms pale ;

But those, with crystal drops among their leaves,
The drops that shook and fell, until the dew
Seemed like the silent tears of morns and eves,
Those will not bloom anew.

Again and times, it may be, without number
Shall love in burning words the silence break ;
Thy heart from out its deep and deathlike slumber
May yet, perchance, awake ;

But mute and wrapt and on their knees before thee,
As God beside His altar men implore—
As I did, O my love, shall these adore thee
Never and nevermore !

I shall be first to die : I bear already
The poisoned dart,
With which thy hand has wounded me past healing,
Within my heart.

I shall be first to die : and my freed spirit,
Beside the gate,
Unswerving still, for love than death is stronger,
For thee shall wait.

Hour upon hour and day on day, the seasons
Will glimmer past—
And I shall hear thee knocking at the gateway ;
All knock at last.

Then, thy despoil and thy misdoing hidden
In earthly grave,
Thy spirit washed as in a second Jordan
By death's chill wave ;

There, where the fitful murmur of existence
Is heard no more,
Hushed like the sound of summer billows breaking
Upon the shore ;

Where first the echoes of the song eternal
Entrance the air—
All that on earth we two have left unspoken,
We'll say it there !

All hope of gladder days I would relinquish,
Though few the years that I shall live to see,
If I might only know what thou to others
Hast said of me !

And all this life . . . and whatsoe'er beyond it
Of life eternal should my portion be,
To know what thou, in solitude and silence,
Hast *thought* of me !

Shall not the aftertaste of this rare nectar
Be gall to thee ?
Then raise it to thy lips, inhale its perfume
And let it be.

And shall of this our love a sweet remembrance
Within us dwell,
To-day let us love dearly, and to-morrow
Let's say : Farewell ! "

Still, as the zephyrs on their pinions light
Hover above a bloodstained field of battle
Through the sweet silence of a summer's night,
Perfumes and harmonies ethereal bringing.

Symbol of love and of love's longing crost,
Thus, evermore, through Shakespeare's grisly story—
Meek as the turtle-dove, her reason lost,
Ophelia with her flowers passes singing.

For a look, this world below ;
For a smile, the heavens above ;
For a single kiss . . . Oh love,
What I would give I do not know !

When on thy breast, O maiden, thou reclinest
Thy pensive brow, so sad and fair to see,
A lily plucked too early
Thou seem'st to me.

Because, in giving unto thee the pureness
Of which in lilies we the sign behold,
Like unto them God made thee
Of snow and gold.

Through tedious days of sickness
And nights bereft of sleep,
Say, who at my bedside lonely
A friendly watch will keep?

Who, when the wasted fingers,
So weak and trembling grown,
Seek feebly the hand of another,
Will clasp them in his own?

Say, who, when death is glazing
The crystal of my eyes,
As the lids begin to stiffen
Will close them gentle-wise?

And when the bell's slow tolling
Is quiv'ring on the air
(If a bell be tolled at my passing),
Will any breathe a prayer?

Then, when in earth's embraces
They've laid me down to sleep,
At my grave unkept and uncared for,
Will any come to weep?

And when the sun, next morning,
Shines bright on land and sea—
Will any one pause to remember
That once it shone for me?

I know on whom art thinking
When sighs escape thy breast,
And of the dreamy languor that enfolds thee
The meaning I have guessed.
Smil'st thou? no distant future
The reason, child, will show;
Thou, it may be, suspectest—
And I—I know.

I know of what thou dreamest
And in thy dreams dost see;
The secret on thy brow so clearly written
Think'st thou to hide from me?
Smile on! no distant future
The reason, child, will show;
Thou, it may be, suspectest—
And I—I know!

I know why thou art trembling
'Twixt smiles and tears,
And in thy woman's soul the strife mysterious
Of hopes and fears.
Thou laugh'st? no distant future
The reason, child, will show;
For while thou feelest much and knowest nothing,
I, who have lost the power to feel—I know!

I laid the lamp aside, and on a corner
Of the disordered bed I sank, and there
Sat long, my eyes upon the wall before me
Fixed in a vacant stare.

When of the cup of anguish I had emptied
The poison-fumes began to pass away,
My lamp was dying, and outside my window
There smiled the day.

On what I thought I know not, nor remember
What tale to me the long night-watches told;
I only know I wept and uttered curses—
And that when morning came I had grown old.

That day, the tears were trembling 'neath her eyelids,
A word of peace was on my lips, that day;
Pride spake—her tears were checked, the phrase of pardon
Upon my lips for ever died away.

Now I have taken one road, she the other;
Yet of our vanished love one thought we keep;
I ask myself: "Oh, why did I keep silence?"
While she is wond'ring: "Why did I not weep?"

Oh, tell me not the treasure-house is empty,
For lack of aught worth hymning, mute the lyre!
Though poets fail, of poetry remaineth
The sacred fire.

So long as waters blush beneath the kisses
Of wakening day,
And wind-swept clouds are wrapt in flaming splendour
By sunset ray;

While perfumes still and harmonies the breezes
Shall waft along,
With spring-time comes, till spring-time cease from coming,
The Voice of Song.

While science still life's sources to discover
In vain shall try;
So long as there are depths as yet unsounded
In sea or sky;

So long as men move onward, seeking blindly
A nameless goal;
So long as there is mystery around us
And in the soul;

So long as we can feel our heart rejoicing,
Nor wear a smile;
So long as we can weep, and lo, our lashes
Are dry the while;

So long as head and heart at variance ever
Do work us teen;
And while we fail with longing for what shall be,
And what has been;

While eyes in other eyes shall be reflected,
Sigh answering sigh;
While in one kiss two souls shall be united—
Song cannot die!

So long as there exists a lovely woman
Within our ken—
The muse of poetry so long shall tarry
With mortal men!

RIMA LXXIII

They closed then her eyelids,
Still open remaining,
They covered her features
With a linen shrouding,
And, some loudly sobbing,
Others in silence,
From the house of mourning
They slowly departed.

The light that was burning
On the floor, in a vessel,
Threw on the house-wall
The shadow of the death-bed,

And one saw, at intervals,
When the candle flickered,
The rigid outline
Of the corpse appearing. . . .

The east was bright'ning,
The day was breaking,
With a thousand echoes
The village waking;
With the contrast before me
Of life and silence,
Of light and shadow,
It flashed across me:
O God, how lonely
Do we leave the dead!

From the house on their shoulders,
To the church they bore her;
In a small side chapel
They left the coffin;
Her pallid remains there
Were laid, surrounded
With sable hangings
And yellow tapers.

When now was ended
The death-bell's tolling,
A crone from her praying
Arose, and crossing
The wide nave, vanished,—
The door with complaining
Swung on its hinges—
The church was empty.

You heard a pendulum
Slowly swinging,
The tapers whisp'ring
Before the altar.

So dark and mournful,
So empty and deserted
It seemed around me,
Again I pondered:
O God, how lonely
Do we leave the dead!

The bell in the church tow'r
With its tongue of iron,
A last salutation
Gave the departed.
With crape on their garments,
The friends and relations
Came in procession,
Gathered around her.

In the last asylum,
Gloomy and narrow,
The pick-axe opened
A niche in the corner,
And there they laid her,
And covered her quickly;
With a last salutation
The mourners left her.
His tool on his shoulder,
A melody humming,
Full soon in the distance
The grave-digger vanished.
The twilight was darkening,
'Twas silent around me,
And, lost in the shadow,
I thought for one moment:
O God, how lonely
Do we leave the dead!

In the long night-watches
Of the icy winter,
When the wooden casements
Creak in the tempest,

And the cold rain-wash
Splashes the windows,
Then I remember
The girl alone there,—

Where the rain is falling
With a sound eternal,
Still backward beaten
By the angry north-wind,
Stretched in a cranny
Of the damp church-wall,
Maybe her members
With the cold are freezing.

Dust to dust, and
The soul to Heaven?
Is nothing remaining
But mouldering ashes?
Who knows? there is something
I cannot explain yet,
That fills us with equal
Repulsion and sorrow,
At leaving so lonely
The helpless dead.

"LOVING ON THE WING"

(To the little girl, Asunciòn de Saragossa y del Pino)

(*R. de Campoamor*)

BEAUTY with the childish brow.
So that Time, through grief and fears,
Steal not of thy charms away,
Like a child disport thee now,
Like a child when maiden play,
Like a maid when old in years.

By the heartaches I have known,
I thee implore, Asunciòn,
Love until thy life is told
As thou lov'st at six years old.
Yes, that is the very way,
Loving, yet in love with naught,
(Sweet one, list to what I say),
Wanting all, nor wanting aught.
Now uncertain, now decided,
Now resolved and now divided,
'Mid thy tears begin to sing,
In one moment laugh and weep,
Faster, faster still—and keep
On the wing, on the wing.

II

Lover not, yet always loving,
In old age an infant still—
Constant when all else is moving,
Changeful when the rest are still.
Sayeth, who in Love's black-letter
Very wise, can read aright:
Oft and little is a better
Motto than the opposite:
And when thy sweet lips seek to kiss,
Let it be a kiss as fearless,
Just as rapid, just as careless,
As indifferent as this.
Madly not thy kissing seek,
Only crazily, and never,
Never on the mouth, but ever,
Hear'st thou, ever on the cheek.
Minding this, the bee who fain
With her deadly poisoned dart
Would pierce and sting thy very heart,
Liveth not to sting again.

III

As thou standest, child, confessèd
Fair among the fair to-day,
Wouldst thou blest among the blessèd
Stand when childhood's slipt away—
Listen what thy poet sings:
Loving little, loving lightly,
See thou rovest
Gaily as the butterfly,
Though it does not signify
That thou lovest infinitely,
So thou lovest
An infinity of things.

IV

So heartfelt these words of mine,
I will even dare to vow
By mine eyes (which, though so old,
Like to mirrors fain would shine,
So thine image they might hold)
I am thinking even now
By their means to cure the smart
Of the wounds in mine own heart,
Scarred and old although it be:
Wounds I should not have to show,
Had I followed long ago
That which now I counsel thee.

V

If the truth thou wouldest know
Of the old Apostle's cry:
"What is fixed is but a show,
Real alone is what doth fly,"

Beauty, turn thy lovely eyes,
Clear as heaven at its fairest,
On the heavens, the meadows green.
At a glance thou wilt have seen
That the richest and the rarest—
That which swims and that which flies.
Thus: the foam upon the waters,
Morning light on glassy seas,
And the incense on the altars,
And the blossoms on the trees,
Sunset's fleeting revelations,
Echoes on the breezes rife,
And the life in our sensations,
And the thought within our life.

VI

Wisest counsel I am meting,
Darling, out to thee in song.
Think! the time, the time is fleeting,
And the way—the way is long.
All enchanting, none beguiling,
Seek the light and not the fire;
Learn to wish without desire;
Like a cloud that sails away
Be thy sadness, and thy smile
Sunshine that shall never pall;
Love, but in thine own best way:
All thy soul with passion fraught
For a something that is naught,
For a nothing that is all.
Smiling, think not on the past,
'Mid thy tears begin to sing,
That's the way—but fast, oh, fast,
On the wing, on the wing

LA NIÑA DE OJOS AZULES

(*A. de Trueba*)

I

SEE you the gentle maiden
With the eyes of azure?
Smiling is she as the heaven
When the clouds have vanished.
Oh say, is she not lovely,
With long lashes falling
O'er cheeks like roses!
She has been to San Antonio
De la Florida,
The blessed saint who apportions
To maids their sweethearts.
And a gallant sweetheart
Appeared on the way homeward
From San Antonio!
For this she is joyful,
For this she is singing,
Like birds low warbling
In the morning early.
Before that, what sadness!
Her fifteenth birthday
And still no lover.

II

The gallant who courted her
Yesterday evening,
Swears that he adores her,
As he would an angel.
And she is such a child still,
That she believes him,
With perfect faith.
Child, let not words of sweetness
Entice thee ever!

In the Lexicon, maiden,
Thou mayst find them of sugar.
Ask rather deeds to prove them,
For those in the Lexicon
Are not to be found.
If one should forsake thee,
Do thou forget him.
Thou wilt find others,
Will love thee better,
For thine, oh lovely maiden,
Thine are the eyes of azure,
The eyes of glory.

III

Child with the eyes of azure,
The eyes of glory,
If once thou wert glowing
Like the summer roses,
Now like the lilies
Art thou pale and drooping.
A kiss let us wager
That I divine it,
The cause of thy paleness
And fading beauty!
For all thy silence,
In this world, maiden
Ev'rything's known.
Each night thou leanest
At the open window,
And the sighs of longing
Which thou exhalest
To me are wafted,
And have told me their story,
Have told it all.
Thy soul is fevered
With love's dread sickness,—
Thou lov'st and they love thee not—
Alas, the rascals!

For so are all men,
And still the most loving
Is the least beloved.
Yet small is the wonder
They should leave thee sighing,
For still men are seeking
The loves of this world,
And to me it seemeth,
Thine shall be liker
To the loves of Heaven.
Alas! who henceforward
May hope for Love's favour,
When the fairest of maidens
Is seeking it vainly!
The poor little maiden,
The child with the eyes of azure,
The eyes of glory.

IV

I have seen thee in the Almudena
Many a morning,
At the feet of the Virgin
Kneeling in prayer.
Say, why didst thou cover
Thy face with the drooping
Fold of thy mantilla?
Child, I have fancied,
May Heaven forgive me!
That thou wast mingling
Thy prayers with weeping.
What wert thou asking
Of the holy guardian
Of Madrid, maiden?
Was it for vengeance
On the ungrateful one,
Who his love denies thee,

Who one day, maybe,
Before the holy
Guardian of the city
Swore to be faithful?
Ah no! in thy soft glances
Is written clearly,
That love, and not vengeance,
Is what thou beseechest.
Whoso loves as thou lov'st,
Instead of avenging her,
Dies, having pardoned.
Would to God, maiden,
I were the loved one,
Like him who forsook thee,
Who left thee to languish,
Like him who disdains thee,
And changed thy roses
For pallid lilies.
For thou hast the soul, child,
That I could worship,
And the love of the Heavens
I behold in thine eyes.
For thine, oh lovely maiden,
Thine are the eyes of azure,
The eyes of glory.

V

Silence! The church bells
Are tolling the death-knell.
Is she dead, the maiden
With the eyes of azure?
Doubtless it is so.
Days have passed since I saw her
In the Almudena,
And sighs no longer
Are wafted from her window,
And the flowers are withered
That once she tended,

With sad everlastings
Entwining her hair.
I would have loved her
So truly, so purely,
With the love known only
To souls like hers . . .
But the maiden whispered:
"One love sufficeth
For one lifetime."
Let other women,
When slighted, avenge them,
Lo, *she* is blessèd
Who dies still loving.
For beyond the anguish
There remaineth a Heaven
Where triumph the noble
Army of martyrs.
And yonder awaiteth
The Love beyond all love
Whoso died of loving.
And there is now the maiden,
The child unfortunate,
Who wept in the Almudena
Many a morning.
The lovely maiden,
The child with the eyes of azure,
The eyes of glory.

Merles and finches, gaily prating
When on night the morning presses,
Tell my love, for him I'm waiting,
Sick at heart with vague distresses.
Now the cock at daylight guesses—
Still he lingers!
Twines he, then, some other tresses
In his fingers?

THE BOAT

(*Manuel Paso*)

THE boat, the boat is waiting,
The night is one of beauty,
Art coming?
—I come not.
—Thou com'st not! Oh say,
See'st thou not the moonbeams sparkling on the water,
Silvering the mountains, lighting up thy way?
—Hark thee, oh boatman!
—Why, friend, dost thou call me?
—Whither wouldst thou take me?
—Far as eye can see!
—Fear overcomes me! . . .
—Nay, who nothing ventures
Ne'er shall cross the water, best at home were he!
—Away then!
—Away then! the boat is ready waiting.
A song in the meantime! the lute is lying nigh.
See'st thou not the sea-foam, flower of the ocean?
See'st thou not the flowers of light in the sky? . . .
A long time it seems now, and onward still we're sailing,
With songs from the boatman, but no song from me.
I weary of the journey—oh whither are we wending?
And still the boatman answers: "Far as eye can see!"

THE SONG OF THE LAND OF CATALONIA

From the *Soul's Pilgrimage*

(*From the Catalan of Victor Balaguer*)

LAND of Catalonia, land of Catalonia,
Home of love and laughter, earthly paradise,
Full of song and viols, full of grace and gladness,
How beautiful, how beautiful in all thy children's eyes!

Wide o'er the blue waters the white sails are gleaming,
Wide o'er the cloudless heaven flashes the light,
The woods and the meadows are joyful with song-birds
In a sea of flowers stand the hamlets white.
The green and fruitful olive, and Afric's stately palm-tree
Are thine, the boughs balsamic with golden apples bright,
Land of Catalonia, land of my heart's delight!

Land of Catalonia, land of Catalonia,
Whence gaily forth has wandered many a minstrel wight,
Where grow and where flourish in peace and in friendship
The splendours of the tropics, the pine of Northern heights,
With a sea that ever, on sunny sands and golden
Scatters foam of silver, ocean treasures bright,
Airs with perfume laden, love-songs on the breezes,
Atmosphere of incense, human hearts a-light,
Land of love enchanted, land to cherish ever,
Redolent of glory in ev'ry sound and sight.
Land of Catalonia, land of my heart's delight!

Land of Catalonia, land of Catalonia,
Paradise resplendent with iridescent light!
Where birds in the gardens noon and night are singing,
Where love in the heart-depths sings noon and night.
In legends mediæval nightingale of glory.
In the old heroics shield of honour bright,
Thine the noblest stories of the days chivalric,
Thine of all earth's maidens fairest to the sight;
The azure sea thy border, that loves the Latin races,
The Pyrenees to guard thee, with crested summits white,
Land of Catalonia, land of my heart's delight!

Land of Catalonia, land of Catalonia,
Sweet romantic country of languor and emprise,
Land of snow-white cities, land of joy and gladness,
How beautiful, how beautiful in all thy children's eyes!

THE SONG OF THE SOUL TO THE VIRGIN OF MONTSERRAT

(*Victor Balaguer*)

God save thee, Mary! God save thee, Sov'reign and
Mother,
Sweetness and life of ours, and hope the fairest!
The outcast sons of Eve to thee are praying:
Misericordia!
To thee they pray, to thee they sigh, O Mother,
The merciful, compassionate and mighty.
O Virgin undefiled, O Mother holy,
Misericordia!
Turn now thine eyes on us before thee kneeling,
Our blessed advocate and holy Lady,
And make us of thy grace for ever worthy!
Misericordia!
To thee, O Lady, the holy Virgin,
The light of heaven, of earth the love,
The little dark-eyed Maid of the Mountain,
Queen of the angels, Mother of God!
To thee, O Lady, my heart, my wishes,
By night my slumbers, my thoughts by day,
All that my life of life possesses,
All that my soul can tell of faith!

Of skies resplendent and heav'nly mansions,
O Mother mine, the one, white star,
To all the shipwrecked on life's wild waters
Port of refuge that shines afar!
For all that suffer are thine, O Lady,
Saint Compassion, they fly to thee,
Shield and protection of all believers,
Mary, Mother of Deity!
When the hour supreme for me approaches,
Queen of the angels, lily of heav'n,

When my eyes are closing in Death, Madonna,
One sweet vision may I behold!
Grant me to see, enwrapt in splendour,
Mist of incense and clouds of gold,
The three great angels, my sure defenders,
Who walked beside me in life's dark way:
The three united: Love, the seraph,
The mother Country, the holy Faith.

And when, O Lady, the life and labour
To thee devoted shall have an end,
And swiftly, my soul in their flight embracing,
The angels three to heaven ascend,
I shall ope my lips, and say: "Madonna,
Pray for me!
Queen of the angels, holy Virgin,
Mary, Mother of Deity."

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE YIDDISH

THE SEWING OF ANOTHER'S WEDDING GOWN

(A SCENE OF LIFE IN WARSAW)

(*I. L. Perez*)

AT A DRESSMAKER'S

Characters:—MADAME, THE FIRST AND SECOND HAND, APPRENTICES.

MADAME

Now then, to work with a will!
No one need idle and pine.
Tra-la-la-la, tra-la-la!
See you these gauzes, how fine?
Satins and silks, how they shine!

Ten are the ells for the train,
Marvel of richness and taste!
Scarce one may credit such wealth:
Brilliants for buttons—no paste!

APPRENTICES

To handle the laces,
The silk, is a treat! . . .
Say, girls, is not "Pavè"
The name of the street?

Ay! there a wall rises,
Stained yellowish-white,
But firm as the granite,
Three storeys in height!

The windows are fastened,
And closed are the doors:
A warder for ever
Is pacing the floors!

The life there, the warmest,
Will freeze in the veins,
For thro' it re-echoes
The rattle of chains.

It sounds, oh, so sadly:
Clink-clank—oh, beware
You crush not the satin,
Madame, have a care!

THE FIRST HAND

Satin-de-Lyon! and gauzes and laces—
'Tis richness with elegance blended!
Lamps, cushions and flowers . . the bride will resemble
An angel from heaven descended!

APPRENTICES

Empty purse and empty cupboard!—
Pay me in advance
Just one rouble!—but the Angel
Looked at me askance.

When the work is done!—One rouble,
Angel!—Not before!
Then I spoke to her of hunger,
But she showed the door!

Something beating in my temples
Drove me all but daft . . .
Come, no nonsense, no pretending!
And the Angel laughed!

Home I went, the Angel's laughter
Ringing in my head . . .
And I pawned the Angel's satin
For a loaf of bread!

Suddenly appeared the Angel
As from heav'n descended! . . .
Neither was it there—you take me?
That the matter ended!

For the Angel lodged and fed me
Thro' the bitter frost,
Three long months! and needed never,
Ah, to count the cost. . .

The Second Hand

Silk, as the skin of the sewer transparent,
Satin, as white as my face,
Rustle and sigh like the bones in my body . . .
Who would not stand in her place?

Soon we shall sew on the buttons, the brilliants,
Heavy as poverty's tear . . .
Faster, oh sewing-wheels, faster and louder—
Drown the bones' creak in my ear!

Creak-crick-creak, bones of mine,
Purr-purr-purr, sewing-wheels,
Merrily, merrily fly!
Creak-crick-creak, bones of mine,
Purr-purr-purr, sewing wheels . . .
When shall we rest, you and I?

Apprentices

There's a little room for you
In a quiet street,
Neither door nor window-pane,
Rest for hands and feet!

No one comes to turn you out—
There's no rent to pay!
There your aching bones shall lie
Till the Judgment Day!

There no sewing shall be done,
Nothing need be made—
Ev'ry one in bridal white
Once for all arrayed!

THE SECOND HAND

Fly, needle, fly, thro' her fine Flemish laces—
Oh, fair and proud! . . .
Soon, needle, soon now for me shalt thou fashion
A shroud, a shroud!

Sparkle, O brilliants! toward you is bending
Her rose-crowned head!
When shall I wear, too, a smile on my features?
When dead, when dead!

Haply the bridegroom, with ardent embraces
The lace will crush—
Who in thy coffin shall haste to caress thee?
Oh, hush, oh, hush! . . .

ONE OF THE APPRENTICES

Pray you, do not sing so sadly!
All my mirth has fled!
Better far than silk and satin
Are my cheeks of red!

I have neither lace nor brilliants—
They are no such prize!
Mine a neck of alabaster,
And two sparkling eyes!

Pearls? my teeth are pearls! you see them?
Ah, how well they please!
Need I coral, when possessing
Scarlet lips like these?

Gold? my hair is gold! believe me
  I've no need to sigh!
Let me laugh, and kiss, and frolic—
  "Joy-in-life" am I!

Apprentices

In ev'ry street, at ev'ry step,
  A rubbish heap you see,
And ev'ry one to help himself
  Is welcome there and free!

And when poor "Joy-in-life" is old,
  Oh, she shall stand and pick
The rags from out the rubbish-heap
  And wield a pointed stick!

First Hand

Once she was a butterfly,
  Fluttered light and gay,
Now the very sight of her
  Makes you turn away.

The Second Hand

Hers to lie on silken cushions—
Warmth and mirth . . .
While for me the straw is scattered
On the earth!

Chandeliers and lamps resplendent
Not a few . . .
While for me are lighted farthing
Candles two!

As you please, with tears or laughter,
Out of sight
Lay me down in silence, happy
If to-night!

Madame

Hush you for one moment,
Hush you, girls, be still!
Tra-la-la! there's music
For you, if you will!

Must you sing so sadly,
Best not sing at all!
There—the eye-lids quiver,
And the tear-drops fall!

And the tear-drops, telling
Of the hidden pain
On the shining satin
Leave a dreadful stain!

Tra-la-la! there's music—
Come, in lighter tone
Sing another's pleasure,
Have you none your own!

Apprentices

Once there lived a little maid,
Beautiful and bright—
Ev'ry day she ate and drank,
Slept, too, ev'ry night!

Lips unbitten all as yet—
There will come a day!—
Rose-red lips of sweetness full
Not yet kissed away!

Little head serenely poised
On the swan-like neck—
Of the price of bread and coal
Little need she reck!

Eyes that tell of happy dreams,
Cheek, the peach's hue,
Over all the "challah-chein"[1]
Spread like morning dew.

And here we sew, oh, may it be
For health and happiness!
In daintiest Parisian style,
A silken wedding-dress!

A little husband she shall have—
No need of him to tell:
The little husband—ah, poor child!
We know him far too well!

MADAME

O Envy, I know thee,
Thou venomous thing!
The poison of adders
Lies hid in thy sting!

There's gall in thy heart's-blood,
There's slime in thy track,
To thee gold is copper,
The snow-drift is black!

The sun—why, 'tis spotted,
The stars are too small!
Spit, spit! on thyself, fool,
The poison will fall!

APPRENTICES

There lived a little mother once,
  Oh, fair and fine was she!
She had a tiny little girl,
  A dainty thing to see!

[1] Bride-grace, girlish grace.

She kissed it on the brow and eyes,
  She kissed it on the curls:
"Remember, darling, cakes and sweets
  Are bad for little girls!

"You must not look at shops and stalls
  Where candied fruit is sold—
You hear what Tata-Mama says?
  Then do as you are told!

"And listen to your mother's friends,
  All pious folk and wise!
When *other* girls? . . . well, turn away,
  Or better: shut your eyes!

"And if by chance they say to you:
  'Oh, jelly is so sweet!'
Then you must blush as red as fire,
  And shuffle with your feet!

"And then, please God, I'll buy for you—
  If you are good and mind!
When fair-time comes, a gilded nut!
  You know, I'm not unkind!

"For one whole penny I will buy
  A little nut of gold,
And it shall be your very own,
  For you to have and hold!

"Outside, just think, a golden shell,
  The brown one underneath—
And you shall kiss and fondle it,
  And crack it with your teeth!"

The little girl remembered all
  That Tata-Mama said,
And when she passed a candy-stall
  She turned away her head.

She shuddered when her playmates cried :
"Oh, jelly is so sweet!"
She stilled her little beating heart,
And shuffled with her feet!

The mother hied her to the fair,
She kept her promise well,
She bought her child a little nut
Within a gilded shell.

It shone so bright! and now to crack
The brown one underneath—
Oh, little, eager, trembling hands,
Oh, little, hungry teeth!

The nut is cracked—oh, little face,
Erewhile so gay and glad!
She spits and spits, and spits again—
The nut, the nut was bad!

"Oh, where's the kernel?" (brokenly
The piteous question came),
"O mother-darling, mother-crown!
Is ev'ry nut the same?"

The mother shows a smiling face
(Tho' sore at heart, I wis),
"'Tis so! for one was given me,
And tasted just like this!"

Madame

Not there is true contentment found,
Where jewels shed their lustre round!
Not all is gold that gleams and glances,
Not all is joy that smiles and dances!
The gilded bed may stand accurst,
The sharpest sauce, provoke no thirst,
And gladness is not bought and sold—
The saying as the world is old!

THE FIRST HAND

Oh, once it befell—ah, and where might it be?
Why, somewhere or other beyond the blue sea!
Befell it then really (you ask), is it true?
As Grandmother told it me, I tell it you!—
My mother is dead, and my father away,
The winter's night, wearying, waits for the day.
There's snow on the doorstep and sleet on the pane,
The wind moans and tears like a dog on the chain.
Hu-hu! (how it howls!) hu-hu-hu! do you hear?
My pulses are throbbing, my cheek pales with fear:
"O Granny!" she hears not—her chin on her hands
The deaf one is telling of far-away lands!

APPRENTICES

Beginnings are better
Imagined or guessed—
Just tell us the story,
And leave out the rest!

THE FIRST HAND

There once stood a housekin (so runneth the tale)
On four wooden feet, in a far-away vale.
So simple and all-unpretending it stood,
'Twas fashioned throughout but of plaster and wood!
The window, tho' small, a delight to behold:
The sunshine illumined it daily with gold,
And night after night,
With silvery light,
The moon and the stars made it shine!

The favour of Heaven was seen there and felt!
Two brothers, they say, in that housekin there dwelt,
Two hearts beat as one both in sorrow and glee,
The toil might be hard, but the toiler was free!

The board was unpolished, and homely the fare—
What matter! the sweet and the bitter they share!
And Time sate and spun
Of the days, one by one,
Her long, her unbreakable thread!

But once to the threshold a stranger there came,
And rubies are flashing and topazes flame!
The Serpent appeared there in splendour and pride.
The elder lad saw him and muttered aside:
"The world contains riches in plenty, I see,
But cursed be the luck of a poor man like me!
Oh, had I one stone
Like to these, one alone,
I could buy me a cow at the fair!"

The thoughts of a man to the Serpent are clear—
She beckoned, she called him, she spoke in his ear:
"It lies but with thee to have treasure and gold,
As much, ay, and more than your housekin may hold!
And diamonds and brilliants and corals piled high,
And ev'rything, brother, that money will buy!
I speak not in jest,
I'll tell thee the rest
Out there in the heart of the wood!"

The Serpent has gone, and the younger thinks: lo,
On each one some beauty doth Heaven bestow!
And what is the worth of it? where is the need?
The eyes of the elder one sparkle with greed:
Coral and diamonds and—ha, but suppose
The Serpent were fooling him? heavens, who knows!
The wood yonder lies—
Forth steals he and flies—
And flies to the Serpent away!

The sun has gone down amid clouds in the West,
And there, by a tree-stem, are sitting at rest
The man and the Serpent—a long while, I ween,
The twain have conversed there together unseen.

(He feels, for at times he will tremble and start,
The tip of her tail coiling cold round his heart !)
"And brilliants, I vow,
And coral enow,
All thine for the taking are they !

"Thou see'est thy brother? a store-house is he
Of coral and diamonds and brilliants for thee !
Let's picture him working: he toils—toils—and now
The sweat, see, is starting in beads on his brow.
It falls—with his hand he would wipe it away:
Prevent him !—he must not ! prevent him, I say !
Still let him toil !
Gather the spoil !
Diamonds, diamonds all !

"Maybe from his lashes a tear-drop there fell.
Thou deemest it water ! thou fool, can'st thou tell ?
An arm round his neck now thou layest, I wis :
Why, brother !—and dryest the tears with a kiss !
Art wasting thy fortune, thou fool ! let him cry !
But gather the tear-drops, and see, as thy dry,
O wonder, each tear
Is a diamond clear—
Rich as a king shalt thou be !

"And then—oh, the lad is of treasure a mine !
One prick with a needle, and coral is thine !
How—*blood*, dost thou tell me ? a third time, thou fool ?
'Tis coral, naught else ! do thou wait till it cool.
Ha, let the blood flow then ! ay, more and yet more,
And thine shall be coral—unending the store !
Good luck to thee ! go,
The secret dost know,
And art not thou stronger than he ? "

And homeward he follows the dim-lighted track.
His eyes, they are burning and circled with black.

His gestures are strange and his lips are compressed—
The love to his brother cries out in his breast!
"Nay, let me but prove it!—this once ere I sleep—
One prick with a needle, scarce more than skin deep!
My brother? maybe!
But tear-drops" (quoth she)
"Are diamonds, and coral his blood! . . ."

The moon, that same night, while the vale lay and slept,
Heard how, in the housekin, one laughed and one wept!
The starlets peeped in, and grew pale with surprise:
May one brother laugh when the other one cries?
The sun was astonished to see, when he rose,
A brother exhausting a brother with blows.
Not yet have the wood
And the stream understood
What passed in the housekin that night!

God's curse to the far-away valley there clings,
And love now has vanished, and joy taken wings,
And peace has departed, and slumber has fled:
One sleeps not for pain, and the other for dread!
One cries: "'Tis my treasure, my riches, mine own!"
The other: "My blood and my tears, mine alone!"
And now by the hair
The desperate pair
One another have seized in their rage!

Apprentices

There's rending of locks
In the far-away vale:
Trach—trach! quickly tell us
The end of the tale!

One sleeps not for pain, and
The other for dread—
Tell, tell! you are holding
Our hearts by a thread!

THE FIRST HAND

Oh, never again such a night there shall be!
I lie and I wonder on Grandmother's knee:
Oh, why grows the shadow so tall and so wide?
And why howls the wind like a dog that is tied?
And why does the window-frame shudder and scream?
Is Grandmother speaking—or is it a dream?
I lie and I wonder on Grandmother's knee:
The terrible night in a dream do I see?—
A tale am I hearing? nay, nay, I but dream!—
Once more, oh, once more, came the shudder, the scream!
Hu-hu! hu-hu-hu! will it never be day?
Where first, here, or there?—will the hut-wall give way?
Puzzled it o'er,
Heard nevermore
The end of the terrible tale!

APPRENTICES

The clock, the clock is striking ten,
  The toil is at an end!
Oh, if so be you *have* a home,
  Rejoice, and homeward wend!

And if a bed, to bed, I say,
To sleep! (first fold your hands and pray!)
  Until the morning red.
Oh, sleeping's fine for such as we:
We rest, and sometimes, dreaming, see—
  A loaf of bread!

ALL

'Tis ten, 'tis ten! the town-clocks chime!
Good-night, Madame!

MADAME

Be back in time!

THE NIGHT-WATCHMEN

(*T. L. Perez*)

A NIGHT the serenest the soul can desire!
But keep you from fire, keep you from fire—
From boiling and baking refrain.
Shut windows and doors too—no prying and peering!
But press down your eyelids and stuff up your hearing,
And slumber as God shall ordain.

And even if sleepless, at rest may you lie,
And list to the dear little bat flitting by,
Flit, flitting—no more you require!
And if you hear far-away laughter and riot,
Screams, curses—well, we are the watchmen, be quiet!
We're here to preserve you from fire.

And cursèd be he who bestirs him and goes
To kindle a fire, or the trumpet who blows,
Who wakes men with clamour and light!
They'll teach him in hell with the night-watch to trifle!
And we, we shall stifle and stifle and stifle
The fire, in the service of night!

To sleep! we are kneeling in pray'r, and we cry
To God the Almighty to draw o'er the sky
A cloud like a funeral pall.
Oh, freely, my brothers, we'll breathe then, for soon
The Lord shall extinguish the stars and the moon,
And darkness shall cover you all!

And louder we'll shout (for we never shall tire)
Keep you from fire, keep you from fire,
Silence, no laughter, no sound!
No flame in the heart, and no light in the mind,
All must be pious and deathly and blind—
We are the watch on the round!

THE JEWISH MAY

(*Morris Rosenfeld*)

MAY has come from out the showers,
Sun and splendour in her train.
All the grasses and the flowers
Waken up to life again.
Once again the leaves do show
And the meadow-blossoms blow,
Once again through hills and dales
Ring the songs of nightingales.

Wheresoe'er on field or hill-side
With her paint-brush Spring is seen,
In the valley by the rill-side,
All the earth is decked with green.
Once again the sun beguiles,
Moves the drowsy world to smiles ;
See ! the sun, with mother-kiss,
Wakes her child to joy and bliss.

Now each human feeling presses,
Flow'r-like, upward to the light,
Softly, through the heart's recesses,
Steal sweet fancies, pure and bright.
Golden dreams their wings out-shaking
Now are making
Realms celestial,
All of azure,
New life waking,
Bringing treasure
Out of measure
For the soul's delight and pleasure.

Who, then, tell me, old and sad,
Nears us with a heavy tread ?
On the sward in verdure clad,
See, he looks and shakes his head.

Lonely is the strange new-comer,
Wearily he walks and slow,—
His sweet springtime and his summer
Faded long and long ago!

Say, who is it yonder walks
Past the hedge-rows decked anew,
While a fearsome spectre stalks
By his side, the woodland through?
'Tis our ancient friend the Jew!
No sweet fancies hover round him,
Naught but terror and distress,
While revealed
In wounds unhealed,
Wither corpses—old affections,
Ghosts of former recollections,
Buried youth and happiness.

Briar and blossom bow to meet him
In derision round his path;
Gloomily the hemlock greets him,
And the crow screams out in wrath.
Strange the birds, and strange the flowers,
Strange the sunshine seems and dim,
Folk on earth and heav'nly powers,—
Lo, the May is strange to him!

Little flowers, it were meeter
If ye made not quite so bold:
Sweet are ye, but oh, far sweeter
Knew he in the days of old!
Oranges by thousands growing
Filled the groves on either hand,—
All the plants were God's own sowing
In his happy, far-off land!

Ask the cedars on the mountain!
Ask them, for they knew him well!
Myrtles green by Sharon's fountain
In whose shade he loved to dwell!

Ask the Mount of Olives beauteous,
Ev'ry tree by ev'ry stream!
One and all will answer duteous
For the fair and ancient dream . . .
O'er the desert and the pleasance
Gales of Eden softly blew,
And the Lord his loving presence
Evermore declared anew.
Angel-children at their leisure
Played in thousands round his tent,
Countless thoughts of joy and pleasure
God to His belovèd sent.
There, in bygone days and olden,
From a wondrous harp and golden
Charmed he songs of beauty rare,
Holy, chaste beyond compare.
Never with the ancient sweetness,
Never in their old completeness
Shall they sound: our dream is ended,
On a willow-bough suspended. . . .

Gone that dream so fair and fleeting!
Yet, behold: thou dream'st anew!
Hark! a *new* May gives thee greeting
From afar. Dost hear it, Jew?
Weep no more, altho' with sorrows
Wearied e'en to death: I see
Happier years and brighter morrows
Dawning, Israël, for thee!
Hear'st thou not the promise ring
Where, like doves on silver wing,
Thronging cherubs sweetly sing
New-made songs of what shall be?

Hark! your olives shall be shaken,
And your citrons and your limes
Filled with fragrance. God shall waken,
Lead you, as in olden times.

In the pastures by the river
Ye once more your flocks shall tend,
Ye shall live, and live for ever,
Happy lives that know no end.
No more wand'ring, no more sadness;
Peace shall be your lot, and still
Hero-hearts shall throb with gladness
'Neath Moriah's silent hill.
Nevermore of dread afflictions,
Or oppressions need ye tell:
Filled with joy and benedictions
In the old home shall ye dwell.
To the fatherland returning,
Following the homeward path,
Ye shall find the embers burning
Still, upon the ruined hearth!

THE PALE OPERATOR

(*Morris Rosenfeld*)

For you with my pen could I draw him,
With terror you'd look in his face,
For since the first day that I saw him,
He sits there and sews in his place.

Years pass in procession unending,
And ever the pale one is seen,
As still o'er his work he sits bending,
And fights with the soulless machine.

I feel, as I gaze at each feature,
Perspiring, and grimy and wan:
It is not the strength of the creature,—
The Will only, urges him on.

And ever the salt tears are flowing,
They fall o'er his thin cheek in streams,
They water the stuff and the sewing
And soak themselves into the seams.

How long shall the wheel yet, I pray you,
Be chased by the pale artisan?
And what shall the ending be, say you?
Resolve the dark riddle who can!

I ween that it cannot be reckon'd,—
But one thing the future will show:
When this one has vanished, a second
Will sit in his place there and sew.

MY BOY

(*Morris Rosenfeld*)

I HAVE a little boy at home,
  A pretty little son.
I think, sometimes, the world is mine,
  In him, my only one!

But rarely, rarely see I him
  With open eyes and bright:
I always find him fast asleep,—
  I see him but at night!

The work; it calls me out betimes,
  It scarce will let me go:
My own dear child is strange to me,
  His glance I do not know.

I toil depressed and weary home,
  In darkness all the way;
My pale-cheeked wife, she waits to tell
  How nicely he can play;

How plain and prettily he asked:
  "Dear Mamma, when's 'to-night'?
Oh, when will baby's Dada come,
  And bring a penny bright?"

I hear, and then I hasten—now
  Or never shall it be!
The father-love flames hot and high,—
  My child must look at me!

I stand beside the tiny cot,
  I listen—hush!—and see:
The little lips, they move in dreams!
  "Oh, where can Dada be?"

I kiss and kiss the shut blue eyes,
  I kiss them not in vain:
They open!—oh, they saw me then!
  And straight close up again.

"Here's Dada close beside you, dear,
  He's brought a penny, see!"
The little lips move dreaming on:
  "Oh, where can Dada be?"

And I, I think in bitterness
  And disappointment sore:
"My little son, some day you'll wake
  To find me nevermore!"

SEPTEMBER MELODIES

(*Morris Rosenfeld*)

I

THE Tkiyes-man[1] has blown his horn,
  The day has lost its shine;
The leaves drop off, in fields forlorn
  The tender grasses pine.

[1] Tkiye: first blast of the Ram's horn.

The earth will soon be cold and bare,
  Her crown of glory falls,
Already to the Mourning-pray'r
  The wild bird loudly calls.

He sings so sweetly and so sad
  A song of friends who parted,
That even if it find you glad,
  It leaves you brokenhearted.

The copses shudder in the breeze,
  And dreaming start in fear.
Awake, O great and little trees!
  The Judgment-day is near!

O men! O trees in copses cold!
  Beware the rising weather!
Or late or soon, both young and old
  Shall strew the ground together. . .

II

(*Morris Rosenfeld*)

  THE Summer is over!
  'Tis windy and chilly,
The flowers are dead in the dale.
  All beauty has faded,
  The rose and the lily
In death-sleep lie withered and pale.

  The stormwind is driving
  A mournful procession
Of leaves and dead flowers along,
  The forest now murmurs
  Its dying confession,
And hushed is the holiest song.

Their pray'rs of the highway
The wildbirds are singing,
They fly to the wide, stormy main.
Oh, tell me, ye loved ones,
Whereto are ye winging?
Oh, answer: when come ye again?

Oh, hark to the wailing
For joys that have vanish'd!
The answer is heavy with pain:
"Alas! we know only
That hence we are banish'd—
But God knows of coming again!"

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